



February 19, 2012

Attention: School District 57 Policy and Governance Committee

Re: Draft Policy 5145.4 Child Protection Review and Input

Dear Committee Members;

District Parent Advisory Council No. 57 Prince George, appointed a committee to review the School District's draft child protection policy. This committee of four parents was chaired by; Don Sabo, and met to review policy 5145.4 on February 13, 2012. The result of the committee review, in the form of comments and recommendations, has been submitted to, and approved by, the Executive of the District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) No. 57.

1. Our overall impressions of draft policy 5145.4 is that it needs to be more child focused and presented in a more procedural step by step manner on how the school district will respond to incidences that require protection of our children. The Delta School District has a set of two procedures that are both child protection focused and step by step procedural. These procedures are attached and form a part of our DPAC submission. DPAC recommends School District 57 use the Delta School District's child abuse reporting procedures and investigation of alleged child abuse by school employee as a model template.
2. DPAC would like to remind the Policy and Governance Committee that the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*, referenced on page 1 in the definition "**Child needs protection**", has become outdated on January 25, 2012.
3. Under the same "**Child needs protection**" definition there are multiple references to "parents". We believe that "guardians" should be included where ever parents are mentioned. There are a significant number of children in care.
4. DPAC observes that a responsibility centre; Superintendent of Schools has been identified on page 2 of the draft policy document. Ultimately, the responsibility for child protection lies with the School Board. The School Board may delegate that responsibility to the Superintendent of Schools, however, to DPAC's knowledge, this has not yet occurred.



5. The 4th bullet under the policy's preamble on page 4 is a concern to DPAC. We believe that it is not the responsibility of the "school district to investigate and/or report to the RCMP allegations of child abuse involving current and former school district employees, volunteers, or contract service providers." Rather the responsibility to investigate and/or report to the RCMP is with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD).
6. On behalf of parents in this school district, DPAC has serious concerns about the draft initial procedures the school district proposes to undertake when a School Board employee has reason to believe that a student is being, or has been, physically or sexually abused by another School Board employee (Page 5 in the draft policy). Regulations 1.2.4.1 and 1.2.4.2 (Abuse by a School District Employee) are un- acceptable to DPAC. We strongly recommend that these two regulations be removed and replace with a procedure similar to the Delta School District procedure, which states;

"Any School Board employee who receives a report of alleged sexual and/or physical abuse by another School Board employee, or who has reason to believe that a student is being, or has been, physically or sexually abuse by a School Board employee shall immediately report the circumstance to his/her principal, who will report the allegation to the Community Manager of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, or in the manger's absence, the intake social worker, and to the Superintendent of Schools or Superintendent's delegate."

The above procedural step (1) of Delta School District's procedure #1145.1 is "child protection" focused. The draft 1.2.4.1 and 1.2.4.2 regulations for the Prince George School District are not "child protection" focused.

7. DPAC would like to have the following regulation or procedure inserted into the school district's child protection policy;

"When an employee resigns over an allegation of child abuse, whether or not the allegation has led to a conviction, a written report of the circumstances giving rise to the allegation and the outcome of the allegation will be placed in a confidential employee's file. The information in a teacher's file will be transmitted to the College of Teachers and will be provided when any other school districts request information for the purposes of employment". – Delta School District; Investigation of Alleged Child Abuse by School Employee Procedure-



8. Regulation 1.2.4.11, on page 6 of the draft child protection policy confuses DPAC. This regulation states; “If the circumstances indicate that a civil claim is likely to be made against the school district, its staff or volunteers, as a result of the incident (child abuse), the Secretary Treasurer is responsible for ensuring that a report is made to the Schools Protection Program.”

Research reveals that most all other School Boards assign responsibility to their legal counsel, should circumstances indicate that a civil claim is likely to be made against the school district.

9. To ensure a minimum level of child abuse prevention and awareness is delivered in the school district, DPAC recommends that stronger more specific wording replace regulation 1.4.1 on page 7. This wording should result in the following suggested guarantee;

“ Once every three (3) school years, the school principal shall review The B.C. Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect, and the school district’s Child Protection Policy with the teaching staff...” – Delta School District Child Abuse Reporting Procedures #1145.

This ends DPAC’s comments and input on the school district’s draft policy 5145.4 Child Protection Policy. All our comments and recommendations are made to ensure the policy remains focused on protecting our children.

Respectfully submitted;

Don Sabo;

Chairperson; District Parent Advisory Council No. 57 Prince George

Attachment: Delta School District Procedures #1145 and 1145.1